

Parks & REC NEWS

WINTER

2005



Parks & Recreation Commission

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Parks Administrator

**Freedom Hill
County Park**

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FREEDOM HILL'S 2004 SEASON WAS - PRESIDENTIAL!

Beginning the special event 2004 season with the President of the United States was a first here at Freedom Hill County Park. The excitement began from the moment the secret service men started meeting with park staff - right through to the moment he walked on the amphitheater stage. It was *Presidential!*

"The secret service team was great to work with," said Anthony Casasanta, Parks Administrator. "In fact, they were quite impressed with our operations. It was a great experience."



Just a few short days later the season began with Loyalty Day. The season was again filled with fabulous festivals, great concerts and the best car shows in town!



The fourth of July fireworks are always a favorite and last year was no different. Some 10,000 people visited the park with many more watching from the streets around town.

The festivals were filled with great food, music and lots of fun for the whole family. The Apple Harvest Festival (St. Raymond's) and the St. Ronald's SummerFest were especially well attended, along with the Irish

Festival which was a first time event in 2004.

Car shows are great at Freedom Hill with all the open space. The Battle of the Brits had a spectacular sunny day to view some great English vehicles.

Freedom Hill's concert season included over 40 shows including some favorites like - *An Evening*





with Boston. Even though the evening included heavy rain the amphitheater was packed with Boston fans who just couldn't leave!

The season was just ending for Freedom Hill when the Macomb County Health Department decided Freedom Hill was the best place to pass out some 6,000 flu shots to eligible County residents. During the week of preparations a large tent was erected for those waiting to get their shot in the Ralph A. Liberato Independence Building. Shots were administered in the Bicentennial Hall within a 35 minute wait.

Finally, the year came to a close with *Tony 'N Tina's Wedding*, a Broadway show where the audience is part of the show. Dinner shows have continued in 2005 and are in the Ralph A. Liberato Independence Building.

2005 Events Scheduled so far:
 Bearing Burners Car Show May 1
 Macedonian Fest June 10-12
 HarleyFest June 18
 Older American Festival June 22
 County Picnic/Fireworks July 4
 Polish Festival July 15-17
 Pet a Palooza July 30, 31
 SummerFest August 12-14
 Bark in the Park August 20
 GTO Car Show August 21
 Fish/Hunt Expo August 26-28
 L.E.T.S. E.A.T. Food Drive Sept. 10
 Battle of Brits Car Show Sept. 11
 Apple Harvest Fest Sept. 23-25



Phase I of Macomb Orchard Trail is the *Place to Go* for many residents

Phase I of the Macomb Orchard Trail has officially opened and has become "the place to go" for many Shelby and Washington Township residents. Even before the Ribbon Cutting in July folks were using the trail for walking, biking and roller blading.

"It's been a great addition to our community," said Joe Youngblood, of the Shelby Parks & Recreation Department. Phase I of the trail includes seven miles from the Macomb Oakland border on Dequindre in Shelby Township between 24 and 25 Mile Roads to 29 Mile Road in Washington Township.

Signage, benches and waste containers have been installed, with more landscaping to be done this year. "On weekends the trail was packed with families biking, couples walking and runners getting their exercising," said Anthony Casasanta, Parks Administrator. "Every time I have been to the trail I have seen people using it. They love it."



Phase II and III of the trail are scheduled for completion this year. The current Macomb Orchard Trail Commission consists of the City of Richmond, Macomb County, Huron Clinton Metro parks, Shelby Township, and Washington Township. Each has a representative who attends monthly meetings.



Donations are being taken for trail development. The Trail Commission hopes sponsorships from families, organizations and corporations can aid in the expense of the trail development and maintenance. For information on donating to the Macomb Orchard Trail visit the web site at:
www.macomborchardtrail.com.

L.E.T.S. E.A.T. Food Drive raises over 100,000 lbs. of food for Macomb families

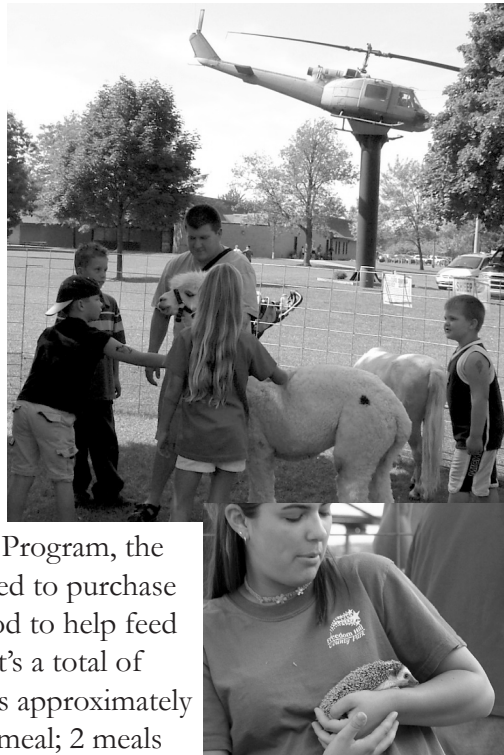
At Freedom Hill County Park the L.E.T.S. E.A.T. Food Drive raised over 100,000 pounds of food for Macomb families in need. This September 11, event had Macomb County residents giving to their own in need, on a day when most were being thankful for what they had.

For the third year now, Freedom Hill has hosted the L.E.T.S. E.A.T. Food Drive for the Macomb Food Program. This year the day went very smoothly with sunny skies and warm air. It was the perfect day to help someone in need and have some family fun at the same time.

The event began with the Veterans Chapter 154 flag raising ceremony and the Sweet Adelines singing the *National Anthem*. There was also a dedication to Michigan Firefighters and Police. A total of seven cities sent their fire trucks to the event. Live entertainment continued all day including PBS's My Bed Bugs, Horizon, Fade to Gray, and more. Even some young dancers from Dancers Only in Utica performed and brought in a large donation from their studio.

A petting farm, moonwalks and face painting kept young children entertained all day with plenty of concessions for families to choose from. Guests were greeted at the entrance where volunteers collected their donations. A large truck was filled with approximately 7,000 pounds of non-perishable items.

According to Sue Figurski, coordinator with Macomb County Food Program, the proceeds from the food drive are used to purchase an additional 101,214 pounds of food to help feed the hungry in Macomb County. That's a total of 108,214 pounds of food which feeds approximately 7,216 people (1 pound of food = 1 meal; 2 meals per day x 5 day supply).



County receives NACo Award for Food Drive

The Food Drive has continued to raise food and awareness for the Macomb Food Program and Macomb County families in need for three years now. The Parks and Recreation Department along with the Macomb County Community Services (Macomb Food Program) received a National Accredited County Award (NACo Award) this past fall for the L.E.T.S. E.A.T. Food Drive event. NACo Awards are presented nationally every year to departments who execute unique and successful programs.

Web site enhanced

The Parks and Rec's web site was recently renovated and will soon be an information for resource for recreation in Macomb County. We want folks to use our site to learn about events at Freedom Hill, and to be a resource on recreation within the county, said Anthony Casasanta, Parks Administrator.

The site now has colorful photos of events at Freedom Hill and information on events, dates, times, etc. It also has links to all municipalities park web sites and major recreational facilities throughout the county.

"We knew our web site needed a new look, but we also knew the county was changing all the county's sites. So we worked together with MIS and came up with a new format. It looks great and is very user friendly. We will continue to add more to it and are always interested in new ideas," said Mr. Casasanta.

Parks Administrator to speak at Conference

The 2005 Michigan Parks and Recreation Annual Convention will have Parks Administrator Anthony Casasanta speaking on the success of the Macomb Orchard Trail. Oakland County Trails Coordinator Marge Gatliff will join Casasanta.

INDEPENDENCE BUILDING RENAMED AS A TRIBUTE TO RALPH A. LIBERATO

The Macomb County Parks and Recreation Commission lost a loyal friend and long-time board member last year. Ralph A. Liberato had been on the Park's Commission for 21 years and served 14 years on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, representing southwest Warren. Liberato was a great fan of big band music and organized the Senior Swing Dances for senior citizens at Metropolitan Beach and Freedom Hill County Park for many years. After his passing, the Board of Commissioners voted to rename the banquet/conference center at Freedom Hill, the Ralph A. Liberato Independence Building in his honor. His dedication to Freedom Hill and to Macomb County residents will be remembered for years to come. Since his passing, the program for seniors has continued with dancing to the Tommy James Band on the third and last Wednesday of each month from 7 pm to 10 :30 p.m. with free admission and free parking.



2005 Senior Swing Dances

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| January 19, 26 | July 20, 27 |
| February 16, 23 | August 17, 31 |
| March 16, 30 | September 21, 28 |
| April 20, 27 | October 19, 26 |
| May 18, 25 | November 16, 30 |
| June 15, 29 | December 21, 28 |



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